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## STL rocker Todd Sarvies is a winner after all



Kevin Johnson

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**By Kevin C. Johnson**

**POST-DISPATCH POP MUSIC CRITIC**

11/13/2009

P. Diddy decided not to make St. Louis rocker Todd Sarvies a star, instead choosing Liz Davis as the winner on the MTV reality show "P. Diddy's StarMaker" last month.

But don't count Sarvies out.

After finishing second on the music mogul's latest show, Sarvies has signed on with Johnny Wright's management company.

"If you look at the names on his roster, they're huge names in the industry," says Sarvies, listing New Kids on the Block, Backstreet Boys, Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears. "Johnny wants to make a good record. I'm gonna sit with him and pick out songs I've written over the years."

Wright's desire to represent Sarvies, known locally for his band John Boy's Courage, oesn't seem like a surprise. During the run of "P. Diddy's StarMaker," the world saw that Sarvies has what it takes, even if he didn't win.

Sarvies, the show's sole rocker, proved to be a consistently strong player, though he says he didn't think he'd go as far as the finale.

"When I first got there and began listening to the other singers in the house, I thought, 'Well, let's see if I can make it a couple of weeks and get my face on TV,'" he says. "But I guess they saw something different in me."

Sarvies sailed through much of the competition, which on some levels put a target on his back, he believes. Sarvies was taken aback when Diddy judged and said he wasn't a fan.

### John Boy's Courage

**Wthe Benji Davis Project and Andrew Hoover**

**When:** 8 p.m. Wednesday

**Where:** Cicero's, 6691 Delmar Boulevard

**How much:** \$8

**More info:** <http://toddsarvies.com>

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"I was superconfident going into that week," Sarvies says. "For him to say I hadn't improved came as a shock. I thought I had improved. So that told me I had to re-evaluate things and go back to the drawing board and focus on trying to bring the big performance."

The show, which filmed last October through December, was a wild ride, Sarvies says, though a great one that allowed him to work with industry movers and shakers such as producer Rodney Jerkins and Laureann Gibson. It taught him a lot about being a performer.

"My experience had been in small clubs and coffeehouses," Sarvies says. "Being on (the 'StarMaker') stage with the production and lights was a whole new world."

The show's producers convinced Sarvies that he needed to spruce up his image as well, leading to his new look in the last couple of shows that includes flat-ironed hair and eyeliner.

"The producers came up to me and said, 'The whole point is to see you become something, evolve from what you were,'" he says. "Basically they were saying, 'Todd, you sound good but you look like (crap).'"

The show gave him \$100 and sent him to the Hollywood hairstylist who cuts rocker Dave Navarro's locks.

"I get my hair cut in St. Louis for less than \$20," Sarvies says. "I figured I'd get a \$20 cut and pocket the change, but it cost \$125."

Now that the show is over, Sarvies is glad to be able to talk about it openly. For a year, his contract prohibited him from revealing any spoilers, not that he could if he wanted to. Different endings were filmed, so Sarvies didn't know who really won until it aired.

"Everyone filmed an ending in which they won, so it was like, 'I won, maybe.'"

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